

Request for Proposals (RFP)
2022 Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact ORIEI
Take It to the Next Level - Multidisciplinary Research Seed Funding Initiative in
Sustainability, Biohealth, Digital Innovation

Overview

The Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact (ORIEI) is offering a **Multidisciplinary Research Seed Funding Opportunity** to advance *scalable* multidisciplinary projects for research and scholarship in **Sustainability, Biohealth or Digital Innovation**. This seed funding opportunity will drive stakeholder engagement and support planning activities to secure transdisciplinary basic and translational research and scholarship organized around topics that align with one or more of Mason's university-level research institutes, [Institute for Biohealth Innovation](#), [Institute for a Sustainable Earth](#), and [Institute for Digital InnovAtion](#).

This request for proposals invites multidisciplinary teams of Mason faculty and external partners to define and lead promising, scalable projects tackling the important grand challenges that President Washington noted in his [President's Report](#) to foster a healthy planet, healthy people, healthy economy, and healthy society. These seed projects should identify concept and project planning activities; potential partners; schedule and milestones; and a **target sponsored external funding opportunity** and proposal due date.

To provide teams with the time necessary to formulate strong proposals, the 2021-2022 ORIEI Seed Funding proposals will not be due until February 28, 2022. ORIEI will also hold a Q&A (which will be recorded) to discuss and answer questions about the Seed Funding Opportunity on January 21, 2022. We expect to fund 3 projects up to a maximum of \$100K each plus tuition and health insurance for one full-time doctoral student per project, for an award duration of 12 to 18 months.

In addition to the seed funding, ORIEI will assist teams by providing training and additional services to the funded teams to pursue a major sponsored external funding opportunity. By accepting the seed funding, the applicant teams must agree to participate in the training, coaching, and support opportunities offered by ORIEI. These may include activities such as Team Science Training, Design Thinking, Partnership Discovery, and Proposal Development Support.

Additional details about the proposal requirements and process can be found below.

Key Dates

Call for Proposals Released:	January 5, 2022
Seed Funding Q&A:	January 21, 2022
Proposal Due Date:	February 28, 2022
Funding Decisions:	NLT May 5, 2022

Eligibility/Requirements/Priority Areas

- All faculty currently allowed to submit proposals under Mason's [Principal Investigators Policy 4012](#).
- **Partnership with an outside collaborator is REQUIRED.** This can be an Industry, Community, Government, Academic Institution, or other external collaborator(s) as appropriate.
- ***Priority will be given to applications that build on PIs' existing research, scholarship, and creative activity portfolio.***
- Proposed projects must align with the domains associated with one of Mason's three university institutes: [Institute for Biohealth Innovation](#), [Institute for a Sustainable Earth](#), and [Institute for Digital InnovAtion](#).
- Proposed projects must include at a GRA stipend for at least one full-time doctoral student (tuition and health insurance for the GRA will be included in the Seed Funding).
- Projects may address all stages of research and scholarship from basic/fundamental research and scholarship to applied/translational projects.
- Faculty are encouraged to propose projects that integrate multiple PIs, disciplines, and programs.

- **A faculty member may participate as a member of the proposing team on no more than 2 proposals** in this competition.
- Faculty may **NOT submit a proposal for BOTH the *Take It to the Next Level - Multidisciplinary Research Seed Funding* and smaller *Building the Foundation – Early Stage Research Seed Funding* opportunity.**

Proposal Requirements

Page Limitation: See Section Requirements below
 Margin: No smaller than half (½) inch) margins
 Font Size: Font size of no less than 11 point
 Line Spacing: No more than 6 lines per vertical inch

The proposal must include the following sections and follow the page limitations associated with each section:

Cover Page (1 page)

- Title of Proposal
- Names and Affiliations of Proposing Team Members [both Mason members and external partner(s)]. For Mason team members, include the Department and College/School
- Identification of the Institute(s) to which the project is most applicable. May identify more than one.

Abstract (about 1/2 page)

Project Description (8 Pages)

- *Statement of the Problem, Significance and Goals*
What is the unmet need and how will your project meet that need or what do you hope to accomplish and what is the significance of the proposed project. What is realized by conducting this project and/or what are the consequences of not completing this project.
- *Approach*
Describe the approach you will take to address the problem and meet your stated goals. What are the specific methods you will use and who will be involved in each aspect of the project. Include a timeline and milestones chart. Describe how the proposed methods and approach promote diversity, equity and inclusion and discuss how the proposed methods are explicitly antiracist. Describe how you will engage student researchers and scholars during the proposed seed and externally funded activities.
- *Outcomes*
Describe the outcomes expected from the seed funding opportunity including the near-term potential for follow on sponsored external funding and the longer-view impact of the proposed project in fostering a healthy planet, healthy people, health economy, and health society.
- *Scalability*
Describe how this project both builds on previous work conducted by the project team/PI(s) and will lead to additional external funding. Please included specific information about the planned funding mechanisms or opportunities (e.g., URLs; funder site, etc.) for the targeted follow on funding. Please indicate whether the targeted funder has funded similar work and, if so, how is your proposed project different.
- *Leadership and Collaboration Plan.* Describe the PI(s) and partner strengths and expertise and how the proposing team members will work together. *We encourage teams that represent the broad diversity of Mason faculty and students. In your description, make sure to reference the required Biographical Sketches for PIs and Senior Personnel.*

In addition, outside the 8-page Project Description, proposing teams may also provide:

- Letters of Support from external collaborators and internal or external stakeholders (4-page limit total for all letters). **Letters should be brief and only reference the collaboration. The letters should not be used to circumvent the page limitations.**

- Biographical Sketches for PIs and Senior Personnel (up to 2 pages per person in any format)
- Proposed Budget (detailed budget categories) and Budget Justification
- References Cited

Proposals that exceed the page limits defined above (i.e., the limits of: 8-page Project Description, 4 pages letters of support, 2-page biosketches) will be returned without review. No additional material or attachments may be submitted with the proposal.

Submission

Applications must be submitted as **one complete PDF document** by 11:59 pm EST on February 28, 2022 to resdev@gmu.edu.

Post Award

- Applicants will be required to submit brief Mid-Project Report (6-9 months after funding depending on the length of the project) and Final Progress Report based on the template provided by ORIEI. The Mid-Project Report will include a meeting with the ORIEI team (Rebekah Hersch and/or Andre Marshall or their designate) where your project progress and opportunities for sponsored external funding will be discussed and evaluated.
- It is expected that the projects will generate the outcomes described in the proposal, including publishing the results and generating strong proposals for the targeted sponsored funding opportunity. Failure to submit a proposal for follow on sponsored external funding may preclude the applicant from receiving subsequent seed funding.
- Applicant teams, as a condition of accepting the award, will be required to participate in the training/support opportunities provided by ORIEI.
- To further support Mason investigators, a pre-submission of the target external follow-on funding proposal will be required. A 'Green Team' will review the pre-submission providing feedback to PIs to further strengthen proposals before final submission to prospective external sponsors.

Review Process and Criteria

An anonymous review process by an external panel of experts will down-select to a short-list of the most promising proposals. These proposals will be recommended for funding to the ORIEI Review Team.

Reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals received. Please note that the review criteria follow the proposal format. Be sure to give the criteria full consideration when preparing your proposals.

Significance and Goals. Evaluate the clarity of the goals and the strength of the argument for importance/significance of the project.

Approach and Outcomes. Comment on the strength and appropriateness of the approach/methods to be used and the potential to generate the expected outcomes. Has the proposing team provided support for diversity, equity and inclusion and does the proposal consider whether the methods promote or disrupt racism and inequity? What are the broader societal and/or economic impacts of the proposed project?

Scalability. Comment on the extent to which the project builds on the team's past work and the likelihood that successful completion of the project can lead to additional external funding to extend and expand the work.

Investigator(s)/Partner(s). Based on the biosketches provided and leadership and collaboration plan, are the Principal Investigators (PIs), collaborators, and other senior personnel well suited to the project? Does the team have the relevant experience to conduct the project? Are there any gaps in experience needed for the project to be successfully completed?

Budget. Comment on how the budget proposed enables the work described in the project description.

Please direct questions to resdev@gmu.edu or to Rebekah Hersch at 703-993-5940.